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NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**AG Schimel Commends Partners, Announces New Data Collection and
Encourages Observance of National Slavery and Human Trafficking
Prevention Month**

MADISON, Wis. – Attorney General Brad Schimel commended the work of public and private partners in combatting human trafficking as he noted the observance of National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month. Attorney General Schimel also announced the launch of new data collection tools to enhance the state’s understanding of the prevalence of human trafficking.

“January is National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month. I encourage everyone to take time to understand what human trafficking is and to know that we all have a role to play in fighting it. I want to thank all the citizens, agencies and businesses who have already joined our mission to make Wisconsin inhospitable to human traffickers,” said Attorney General Schimel. “In 2018, we trained approximately 5,000 people on how to recognize and report human trafficking. We now have ongoing partnerships with hotels, convention bureau executives, tribal casinos, trucking and busing companies, and other businesses and professional associations with a workforce in a position to see and report this crime. These partnerships will continue to expand the network of citizens who can assist law enforcement by reporting suspected trafficking, which means victims will get help sooner and traffickers will be apprehended more often.”

The Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) provides expertise and leadership on policy development, education and training, victims’ rights and services, enforcement, and prosecution of human trafficking through its Human Trafficking Initiative. The mission of the Human Trafficking Initiative is to make Wisconsin inhospitable to human traffickers and to support victim-centered strategies and partnerships throughout the state.

The DOJ Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) Human Trafficking Bureau provides specialized training and operational assistance to law enforcement to identify, target and prosecute traffickers. Recent bureau partnerships with the Wisconsin State Patrol and other law enforcement agencies continue to greatly enhance investigative coordination and intelligence sharing. The bureau works with all levels of law enforcement to promote victim-sensitive approaches and to assist with demand suppression operations, to deter sex buyers who create the demand that fuels the crime of human trafficking.

Attorney General Schimel also announced today the launch of new data collection tools, through the DOJ Bureau of Justice Information and Analysis, to enhance the understanding of reported incidents of human trafficking in Wisconsin communities. Throughout 2018 divisions within DOJ collaborated to create a survey to be distributed to all law enforcement agencies throughout Wisconsin this month. The survey will include basic information from all agencies throughout the state regarding the known frequency of sex trafficking incidents and charges, as well as information from law enforcement agencies regarding agency practices and procedures as they relate to human trafficking cases from 2018.

In addition to the survey, a longer-term solution will be launched this month that will allow all law enforcement agencies in Wisconsin to report incident-level detail about sex trafficking and labor trafficking cases through the Uniform Crime Reporting program. This collection effort will include details such as victim and offender demographics, relationships, clearance information, location of incidents, and weapons used, and will be required for all reported trafficking cases statewide, including cases later deemed unfounded by the agency. The information collected through these new tools will help facilitate the understating of human trafficking occurring in the state of Wisconsin.

More information about human trafficking can be found on DOJ's Human Trafficking Initiative website: www.BeFreeWisconsin.com.

The *National Human Trafficking Resource Center* provides a 24-7 hotline in multiple languages for victims or to report a tip: 1-888-373-7888.